

# INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

SUBJECT Organization and History of the  
Border Police

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The border police of the Soviet Zone acquired particular interest in April 1948 when, simultaneously with the first blockade measures, the Soviet Military Administration ordered a large-scale increase in the border police's strength. Concurrently with the personnel increase, certain organizational changes were initiated which forecast the later development of the border police into a well armed paramilitary force under the centralized command of the German Administration of the Interior.

1. Toward the end of 1946, acting on orders of the Soviet Military Administration for Germany (SVAG), the Soviet Military Administrations of the five Soviet Zone Lander issued orders to the Chiefs of the Land Police to place at the disposal of Soviet military units specially selected police personnel. Whereas the administrative handling (pay, supplies, clothing, and so forth) of this personnel continued to be a responsibility of the Land police, the operational control, command, and disciplinary functions devolved upon the aforementioned Soviet military units. These specially selected police were to assist in the guarding of zonal boundaries, up to then performed exclusively by Soviet military personnel, which were diverted from their primary military functions into a sphere serving essentially German interests. There ensued a transitional period

other with the Soviet units being gradually moved to encampments and housed under conditions more suitable for training purposes. This development continued throughout the years 1947 and 1948 and, at this writing, has not come to its final conclusion.

2. The Soviet border control system was by its very nature organized along military lines. Thus the SMA border sectors were drawn not in accordance with the border lines of the various Länder, but in accordance with the military "sector" system, allotting to SMA Saxony the "Southern Sector" against the Czechoslovak Republic and Bavaria (US Zone), to SMA Thuringia, Saxony-Anhalt, and Mecklenburg the "Western Sector", and by and large to SMA Brandenburg the "Eastern

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Sector". The SMA officials were in direct contact with the Chief of

zonal border. The bulk of the German border police were organized into groups of approximately ten men, called border control ~~detach-~~ ~~mentos~~ (Grenzüberwachungskommandos) -- roughly comparable to Soviet field patrols -- and stationed in the more important border localities. They, in turn, either set up individual advance posts or patrolled the border as a unit. Several border control commands were joined under the command of a border Kommandantur (Grenzkommandantur), which was usually in conjunction with the command post of a Soviet company. The border Kommandantur had a staff of approximately fifteen policemen. The border Kommandanturen were placed under the command of a border police section (Grenzpolizeiabteilung) with headquarters at the CP of a Soviet battalion. The border police section had a staff of approximately twenty men; in some instances reserve units were assigned to border police section headquarters.

3. It can be assumed that until March 1948 the strength of the German border police remained somewhat below 4,000 men, i.e., approximately [redacted] of the uniformed police in the Soviet zone.
4. In the early spring of 1948 the German Administration of the Interior officially raised the issue of an improvement in the control of the borders. In the words of the Chief of Department "S" of the GAI, Vogel, it had been found that "the tasks to be performed in the execution of border control functions increase in importance whenever there are political and economic factors, domestic or external, which cause political changes or shifts on either side of the border. Increased activity of the border police resulted from the necessary fight against organized bands roaming the border and from the countering of agent activities. Whereas the illegal personal travel and smuggling along the old Reich borders of the Soviet Zone and of the new Polish border are not in excess of the normal incidence of such violations in time of peace, the zonal demarcation line between East and West in Germany aroused the interest of the whole German population." Vogel further stated that the preservation of better economic conditions in the Eastern Zone, the planned economy, the success of the expropriation program and the combatting of fascist elements present a challenge to take up the fight against smugglers, profiteers, and saboteurs by means of a strengthened border police. Illegal border crossers as the "standard-bearers of destruction and incitement to war" should be countered by the "democratic sense of responsibility of the people's police (Volkspolizei)". The policing of borders should be performed in close collaboration with anti-fascist organizations in the border districts. "Stabilization, advancement, and safeguarding of the peace economy of the Soviet Zone" was to be considered the function of the organs of border control.
5. [redacted] three days after the walk-out of the Soviet element from the Allied Control Council and a week before Soviet measures came into force which placed Berlin de facto under blockade, the Military Administrations of the Soviet Zone Länder ordered an increase of the border police from approximately 4,000 to ~~10,000~~ ~~10,000~~ men. In pursuance of this order the Schutzpolizei forces of the major cities of the Länder were heavily drawn upon: The Land police of Saxony transferred 1,695 former Schutzpolizei personnel to the Border Police of Thuringia; the Land police of Saxony/Anhalt assigned 1,670 city policemen, "considered to be politically and personally reliable", to the border police. The transfer of reinforcements to the border police took place in little more than twenty-four hours. Vice-presidents of the German Administration of the Interior personally supervised the operation and were held by the SMA personally accountable for the prompt execution of Soviet orders. As of 24 March the authorized strength of the new

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partment "S" of the German Administration of the Interior as follows:

Berlin, April 10

## Brandenburg

|                        |   |    |
|------------------------|---|----|
| Border Police Sections | 3 | 3  |
| Kommandaturen          |   | 9  |
| Kommandos              |   | 63 |

Personnel Strength 703

## Mecklenburg

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| Border Police Sections | 1  |
| Kommandaturen          | 6  |
| Kommandos              | 61 |

Personnel Strength 711

## Saxony

Organizational breakdown unchanged  
(Not available to source)

Personnel Strength 1,788

## Saxony/Anhalt

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Border Police Sections | 3   |
| Kommandaturen          | 14  |
| Kommandos              | 144 |

Personnel Strength 2,195

## Thuringia

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Border Police Sections | 8   |
| Kommandaturen          | 24  |
| Kommandos              | 477 |

Personnel Strength 4,520

Total Border Police personnel strength after reorganization: 9,917

6. The ~~reorganization~~ <sup>reorganization</sup> above closed the second phase of the systematic reorganization of the border police. But before long the GAI was faced by a serious morale problem which caused considerable annoyance to the SVAG. Members of the border police were caught visiting ~~local farmers~~ <sup>local farmers</sup> who had been billeted with local farmers developed extra-curricular interests in the farmers' wives. Desertions and absence without leave were frequent. The upshot of these occurrences was that the Chief of the Directorate of Internal Affairs of the SMA (UVD, SVAG), Major General Malkov, gave instructions to the GAI to the effect that border policemen were to be billeted and fed as units, meals were to be improved, trips and movie-shows were to be arranged, radios installed, and so forth. A 15% pay increase was promised. This unwonted largesse grew out of the concern for keeping the border police "on the ball".

7. The reorganization of the border police went through its third phase in the summer of 1948. By that time it had grown to be so important that it was taken out from under Department "S" and raised to the status of an independent department (Abteilung "G"); later (in conjunction with the newly established paramilitary police) it became

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abteilung Grenzpolizei und Bereitschaften, abbreviated GP/B). The third phase in the development of the border police coincided with the installation of Dr. Fischer as the new chief of the GAI and the general reorganization of that agency initiated by him.

8. The ~~Relationship~~ between border police and customs control is as follows: All matters concerning the security of the borders have been placed in the hands of the border police. Customs offices are exclusively confined to the discharge of customs functions. An attempt of the Central Administration for Finance to revive the old system under the Nazi régime, which had set up a centrally controlled Customs Service along military lines with personnel subjected to military training and discipline, armed, and placed under special military law, was abandoned.
9. In reorganizing the border-control service, however, the GAI has closely hewn to the Nazi pattern which entrusted the enforcement of border-crossing regulations to the care of the Sicherheitspolizei und SD (Security Police and Security Service) and the performance of all police tasks in connection with border control to the border detachments of the Gestapo. The new border police, in resemblance to the above pattern, has been placed under GAI jurisdiction. Conceived as being primarily a "political police" it determines in closest collaboration with K-5 (Section 5 of the Criminal Police Department), the secret political police organ of the GAI, and with the competent Soviet organizations, whether an illegal border crosser should merely be subjected to a fine, or be turned over either to K-5 or the Soviet authorities for further disposition.
10. [REDACTED] the German Administration of the Interior issued an order which removed the border police from the jurisdiction of the Länder Ministries of the Interior and placed it directly under the control of Border and Paramilitary Police Branch, GAI. [REDACTED]

the evolution of the border police into a centrally directed, paramilitary force.

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